



LOUISBURG PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY JUNE 29, 2016

The Planning Commission of the City of Louisburg, Kansas met at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers with Chairperson Andy Sauber presiding.

ATTENDANCE:

Commission Members: Nate Apple, Brandon Fosbinder, Rick Phillips, Les Page, Thorvald McKiernan, and Anne Smith
Mayor: Marty Southard
City Council: David Cannon
Recording Secretary: Rusty Whitham
Visitors: Michael Pickman and Tim Johnson

ITEM 1: ROLL CALL

ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

A motion was made by Nate Apple to adopt the agenda as submitted. The motion was seconded by Brandon Fosbinder. Motion passed 7-0.

ITEM 3: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Thorvald McKiernan to approve the minutes from the May 25, 2016 meeting. The motion was seconded by Anne Smith and passed 6-0. Brandon Fosbinder abstained.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENTS: Persons who wish to address the Planning Commission regarding items not on the agenda may do so at this time. Speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes. Any presentation is for information purposes only.

None

PUBLIC HEARING BUSINESS ITEMS:

Item 5: None

NON-PUBLIC HEARING BUSINESS ITEMS:

Item 6: Discussion with Melisa Harris concerning commercial trucks located on a lot adjacent to 207 South 5th Street.

Melisa Harris was not present at this meeting. No one was present to represent Ms. Harris. Most Planning Commission members concurred with the Staff Report. Staff was directed to move forward with the removal of the truck and the removal of the gravel parking area from the property adjacent to 207 South 5th Street.

OLD BUSINESS: Any old business the Commission may wish to discuss

Item 7: Discussion with Michael Pickman concerning practice soccer field parking area on Countryside Drive.

Michael Pickman (LHS Soccer Coach) approached the Planning Commission to discuss his concerns with closing the gravel parking lot adjacent to the practice soccer field on Countryside Drive. Pickman read aloud comments noted from fellow soccer coach Conley. Pickman stated that it is essential that the parking lot be opened to help the kids in our community. Not only will the kids who play soccer benefit from the lot, other organizations and teams will also benefit. An open parking lot will encourage kids to use the fields. Now that the soccer field parking lot is closed people are using the nearest lot located next to the football practice field on Wildcat Drive. This is causing overcrowding of the lot and has created a potential safety danger. Pickman wishes that a solution to this problem be found.

Pickman acknowledged that the soccer field gravel parking lot doesn't meet City Code. Pickman also suggested that the overcrowded lot near the football field is a safety hazard that maybe unacceptable. He mentioned that his car was recently backed into by an inexperienced driver. An inattentive driver can easily hit a kid walking across the parking lot or street. If the lot wasn't so crowded this type of accident may have been avoided.

Chairperson Andy Sauber explained that USD416 approached the Planning Commission in 2013 about installing a gravel parking lot at the soccer field on Countryside Drive. At that time USD416 was informed that City Zoning Regulations require that all parking lots be hard surfaced with either concrete or asphalt in accordance with the City Zoning Regulations. Gravel parking lots are not allowed. The Planning Commission allowed the temporary installation of a gravel lot and stipulated that it be hard surfaced within two years. This gave USD416 a two year grace period to have the parking lot surfaced properly in accordance with City Zoning Regulations. Three years passed and the gravel lot was not hard surfaced. No one said a thing about the gravel lot at the soccer field until USD416 again approached the Planning Commission requesting additional gravel lots. If the Planning Commission allows USD416 to maintain a newly constructed gravel parking lot, we are obligated to allow others to do the same.

Sauber added, typically the Planning Commission doesn't allow a parking lot to be used until it's hard surfaced. In this case the Planning Commission gave USD416 a two year grace period. If USD416 hadn't approached the Planning Commission concerning gravel parking lots the soccer field lot would be open today.

Les Page and Andy Sauber reminded the audience that during the March 30, 2016 Planning Commission three options were discussed with USD416 to resolve this issue:

1. Remove the gravel parking lot
2. Hard surface the gravel parking lot
3. Leave the gravel in the lot but close parking lot to use

USD416 chose to close the parking lot. Les Page recalled that USD416 was concerned that paving the parking lot may not be a good idea. There are multiple configuration options for future development of the athletic fields and some plans don't require a lot where the lot is currently located. Only one of the options had the parking at its current location. If they pave the lot now they may have to remove it to facilitate future development of the athletic fields. USD416 determined that removing the parking would be a waste of money.

Apple stated that he wasn't at the March 30, 2016 Planning Commission meeting when the parking lot was discussed. Apple mentioned that extensions have been given in the past. Apple asked why we can't do that now. Les Page replied that extensions were discussed. Sauber explained that due to budget constraints the next time USD416 would have an opportunity to hard surface the lot would be in 2022. Sauber added that's if a bond issue was passed.

Michael Pickman mentioned that he understood the code compliance issue. He now will discuss his concerns with USD416. Pickman was still concerned with the amount of traffic on Wildcat Drive and limited parking in the area has created a safety issue. Pickman finished by stating that he attended this meeting to help alleviate this situation and help find a resolution.

Andy Sauber mentioned that this issue is within the School Boards hands. There are options to bring that parking lot up to code. Nate Apple asked if the Planning Commission can extend the grace period another two years. Les Page replied by asking what would be accomplished by giving USD416 another two years. They already mentioned that they won't be able to pave it for another 6 years because of budget constraints. The Planning Commission will be discussing this again in two years asking why the parking lot isn't hard surfaced.

Marty Southard mentioned that there is a safety issue. People can't park on Countryside Drive and are forced to park on the street on Wildcat Drive and the parking lot nearest the football practice field. Southard suggested that giving a two year extension would alleviate the safety issue that has been created due to the closing of the soccer field parking lot. Southard stated that there has already been one accident. Sauber replied that in two years we will have this same discussion. Southard then asked why not give USD416 a six year extension.

An unidentified woman from the audience mentioned that an extension would provide time for parents to fundraise enough money to have the parking lot hard surfaced.

Michael Pickman suggested any type of extension would give parents and coaches enough time to approach the School Board and develop a course of action. Nate Apple asked when does the School Board meet. Pickman replied second Monday of each month.

Les Page asked would any other Planning Commission Member be willing to listen to any type of proposal or plan from USD416 concerning an extension. Nate Apple stated that the school has already spent money on the gravel and we all know that money for schools is tight. Apple understood the principle of not granting an extension 100%, but he doesn't understand the logic behind it. Apple restated Marty Southard's sentiment that providing a two year extension alleviates a safety issue.

Les Page suggested that this will be an item that will just be discussed again in two years. He also understood that a two year extension will give people time to work with USD416 to do some fundraisers or develop a course of action to pave the parking lot. Les Page mentioned that he would be open to listening to any proposals that would hard surface the parking lot in a reasonable amount of time. Anne Smith mentioned that she would also be open to such discussions.

Michael Pickman stated that three years ago the school said they couldn't have a girls' soccer team because there wasn't enough money. The people in attendance at tonight's meeting raised enough money to form a girls' soccer team. If given the opportunity, in two years they will find a way to make the parking lot happen.

Thorvald McKiernan mentioned that USD416 had 2 ½ years and nothing got done. Nate Apple suggested that there is a precedent for providing extensions for instances such as this. Apple stated if the Planning Commission granted a two year extension tonight, no one at tonight's meeting can back it up. Only USD416 can make such an arrangement. It was noted there was not a representative for USD416 in attendance.

Les Page suggested that we give everyone an opportunity to talk to USD416 and find out if it is possible to have the parking lot paved within a reasonable amount of time. Andy Sauber stated that he would be open to further discussions. Sauber suggested he may support a one year extension but any proposal must have USD416 backing.

Nat Apple suggested that if USD416 says that they can't hard surface the parking lot until 2022 that would place the Planning Commission in a bad spot.

Thorvald McKiernan asked how long does this congestion last. McKiernan stated that the kids use the school parking lots and they are required to walk to fields during the school year. He also noted that the practice fields are not used for games. McKiernan asked if this is just a summertime issue. Michael Pickman replied that, during the girls' soccer season the kids are required to use the school parking lot. However, coaches are still required to transport equipment to the fields. Pickman also mentioned that other organizations and teams use the fields year around. Summer is when the fields get the heaviest usage. Summer is when camps are using the fields. Spring also gets heavy usage. Also normal school traffic compounds the congestion problems.

Marty Southard suggested whatever plan USD416 comes up with to hard surface the parking lot should be done in writing.

Andy Sauber suggested the Planning Commission take a straw poll. He asked if USD416 commits to hard surfacing the parking lot within a year would the commission members be willing to discuss opening the parking lot. Some members were open to further discussions. Anne Smith mentioned that she wished that the parking lot be opened now because this is an immediate safety issue. Both Andy Sauber and Less Page were opposed to opening the parking lot until a plan was in place to hard surface the area.

Tim Johnson asked what triggers this code. Is it for new construction and how does it get applied? Nate Apple and Andy Sauber replied that the code applies to new construction after 2010. The last update to the City Zoning Regulation was done in 2010. It was also explained that if a property owner has gravel parking lot older than 2010 it would be considered grandfathered. However, if the parking lot is changed (made larger or changed configuration) the lot shall be requirement to come into compliance.

Johnson then asked why is the area between Fox Hall and the New City Hall constructed with gravel and used as a parking lot. Sauber replied that the area is not a parking lot. An unidentified audience member mentioned that there are vehicle parked there now. Sauber replied that that area is a zero maintenance scape and parking is not allowed. Nate Apple stated that area has been gravel for as long as he can remember.

Johnson stated that he has noticed many businesses in town that have gravel parking lots. He specifically mentioned Mossman's Lumber. He asked when will the Mossman's property be required to pave their parking lot. Nate Apple replied when someone purchases the property they will be asked to comply with standards if the property changes its intended use (Lumber/hardware Store) or makes significant changes to the building or parking lot. A change in property ownership alone will not trigger compliance to the 2010 standards.

Johnson stated that the Planning Commission has been more than reasonable to hearing citizen's safety concerns with the parking lot. Johnson mentioned that he is still concerned about the City liability if an accident does occur.

Johnson then asked how does the community benefit from closing the parking lot. He went on to endorse Anne Smith suggestion to open the parking lot until the final plan to hard surface the area with USD416 is solidified. Johnson added that the summer months are when the kids are using the fields the most and parking is at a premium. It's Johnson's opinion that summer is when most of the activity on the field is going on. Both Nate Apple and Andy Sauber agreed that no one is benefitting from not having the parking lot open. Sauber suggested that enforcing standards is what is being achieved.

Page suggested that if USD416 agrees to pave the parking lot in a reasonable amount of time a solution can be found. He cautioned that the solution may not come this week, it may take a month or so.

Nate Apple mentioned that the City Council can override the Planning Commission at any time. Marty Southard stated that the next City Council meeting is on July 5, 2016.

Nate Apple obtained a quote during the meeting to asphalt the parking lot. He stated that it will cost approximately \$16,000 - \$18,000 to hard surface the gravel area.

No further discussion occurred concerning this issue.

Item 8: NEW BUSINESS:

None

Item 9: REPORTS:

Les Page asked when we are going to start the Planning Commission meeting at 6:30pm as discussed during last month's meeting. Marty Southard mentioned that the City Council approved the earlier start time. Staff mentioned that the start time change to 6:30 will most likely begin at the next Planning Commission meeting scheduled for July 27, 2016.

ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Nate Apple to adjourn the meeting. Second was made by Brandon Fosbinder. The motion passed 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Submitted by Rusty Whitham